

I am working to strengthen our communities by making them more livable and safe for our citizens. Livable communities create safe, healthy places for our children to learn and grow and inspire living practices that are healthy for our citizens, economy, and environment. Working to shape livable communities is an important legislative priority for me and my colleagues in Congress.

What are Livable Communities?

Livable communities are communities in which families have equal access to education, economic, housing and transportation opportunities. To create livable communities, we must invest in local infrastructure projects and strengthen positive relationships between transportation, health, energy, environment, housing and education initiatives.

Congressional Collaborations

As a member of both the Democratic Caucus' Livable Communities Task Force and the Congressional Urban Caucus, I am able to work with other members of Congress to promote legislation that focuses on creating safe and more livable communities and spurs a healthier environment and economy for our citizens.

Specifically, the goal of the Livable Communities Task Force is to identify the ways in which the federal government can affect community livability and improve Americans' quality of life. This includes reducing the nation's dependence on oil, protecting the environment, improving public health and investing in housing and transportation projects that create jobs and give people more commuting choices. Investing in smart infrastructure projects in our backyards will create healthy and vibrant communities.

As a member of the Congressional Urban Caucus, I work with other members who represent the nation's metropolitan areas to formulate ideas on how best to address the challenges faced by cities. Within this Caucus, I have led the effort to create an Urban Parks Task Force to focus on how the revitalization of urban parks can better metropolitan areas by providing healthy alternatives to at-risk youth.

Legislative Initiatives

I have introduced two bills that would help communities support smart growth and promote healthy lifestyles through infrastructure investments.

The first bill I have introduced is H.R 3517, the Commute LESS (Leveraging Employer Support and Successes) Act to provide a better connection between transportation planners and employers. This bill would give employers the tools and resources they need to provide their employees with real alternative forms of transportation, including transit, carpooling, telework, and biking or walking to work in an effort to reduce congestion and improve the environment.

The second bill I have introduced, H.R. 3734, the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act, would provide federal assistance grants that must be matched with local funds to rehabilitate and develop urban parks and recreational infrastructure. These grants would enable communities to invest in programs that address juvenile delinquency and, therefore, make our neighborhoods safer. Additionally, this legislation would promote physical activity, create green jobs using green technologies, and encourage community participation to improve the local environment.